

COURSE PLAN for Pol. 726, Hobbes. Spring 2016. Dr. Thomas West, Hillsdale College

1/21. Introduction. Before the first class, please read the “Biographical Materials” section of Curley’s front matter in his edition of *Leviathan*, xlvii-lxxi (about 25 pages). I also strongly recommend reading (or re-reading) William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* before classes start. I will refer to it in connection with our discussion of Hobbes on religion, on the state of nature, on the origin of the commonwealth, and on consent.

1/26. Prelude to the Enlightenment: Aquinas, Dante, Machiavelli. I will hand out copies of these readings in the first class.

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| Dante, <i>Purgatory</i> (about 1320), Canto 16, lines 64-114, 127-132 | packet, p. 2 |
| Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> (1513), ch. 25 beginning | 4 |
| Machiavelli, <i>Discourses on Livy</i> (1531), bk. 2, ch. 2 (Christian vs. pagan religion) | 5 |
| Aquinas’s Reconciliation of Reason and Revelation (about 1275) | 6 |

1/28. Hobbes, *Leviathan*: Letter Dedicatory, Introduction, and ch. 1-3.

2/2. Going forward, for each class period, read the 20 to 25 pages that follow the pages we last discussed in class. Exceptions will be announced in class or by email.

Throughout the course, read or at least skim the corresponding parts of *On the Citizen* and *De homine* (the latter is in *Man and Citizen*).

When we get to ch. 6, read these:

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| Dante, Aristotle, and Hobbes on Desire, Choice, and Morality | 10 |
| Bartlett, “Aristotle’s Science of the Best Regime” (150-2) | 14 |

When we get to ch. 13, read this:

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| Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , from bk. 1, ch. 1-2; bk. 3, ch. 3 and 9 | 17 |
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When we get to ch. 14, read these:

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| Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i> , bk. 5, ch. 7 | 20 |
| Strauss, <i>Natural Right and History</i> , 156-58 | 20 |
| Aquinas, On the Natural Law, selections from S.T., 1-2, Q. 91-100 | 23 |

3/29. *Leviathan*, ch. 19-21.

3/31. Lev., ch. 22-25, especially ch. 24 (only ¶1-6, 10, 12); ch. 25 (¶2-3, 11-14).

4/5. Lev., ch. 26-29. Especially ch. 26 (¶1, 8, 11-12, 21, 24, 26, 28); ch. 28 (¶27 only); ch. 29 (¶1, 14, and 15).

4/7. Lev., ch. 30, all.

4/12. Lev., ch. 31-32, all. When we get to the discussion of Christian theology in Part III, read Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ch. 6, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1710>. You might

also wish to compare Locke's account of Christianity in *Reasonableness of Christianity*, on Blackboard.

4/14. ch. 33, 34, all. ch. 36 (§5-6, 9, 19). We will mostly skip ch. 35.

4/19. ch. 37-40. We will mostly skip ch. 37. ch. 38-39, all. ch. 40 (§6, 10, 12, 14).

4/21. ch. 41-43. We will focus on ch. 41 (§4); ch. 42 (§1-3, 11, 17, 67, 70, 84-86); ch. 43 (all).

4/26. ch. 44-47. We will focus on ch. 44 (§1-5); omit ch. 45; ch. 46 (§1-18, 31, 33, 37); ch. 47 (§20).

4/28. The final chapter ("A Review and Conclusion").

5/3. Review.

Paper due dates:

1st paper: Sunday, March 6. Instructions and topics to be announced.

2d paper: Sunday, April 17, 5:00 pm (by email). Hard copy due Monday by 5:00pm in the mail slot outside my office door.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Papers and exams are graded according to these criteria: (1) thoroughness (containing the most important points appropriate for essays of the assigned length); (2) key points supported by evidence from the readings; (3) clearly written; (4) well organized; (5) correct in regard to English grammar, word use, and spelling. Papers and Comments should be printed 1.5 spaced. I don't care about footnote format.

65% of the grade. Two papers. Tentatively: the first paper will be 6-8 pages, and the second 10-12 pages. Some suggested topics will be distributed. In the course of these papers, show that you have a basic understanding of how your interpretation compares with two or three leading scholars with whom you disagree. Please keep this discussion of scholars to a minimum unless there is a direct relation to your theme; the interpretation is the main point of the paper. I will put a variety of articles and books on Blackboard. You can look at some of these to get an idea of the main currents in the scholarship. Late papers will be accepted, but the grade will typically be lowered.

The second paper should be 3,100 to 3,700 words (about 10-12 pages). Students should decide on their own topics, but please get permission via email for your topic. If you change your mind about the topic after you get started, please check with me before you proceed.

I suggest a topic that is controversial among Hobbes scholars, or at least something that is not obvious and requires interpretive effort. For example, was Hobbes a political absolutist?

In the course of the paper, show that you have a basic understanding of how your interpretation compares with two or three leading scholars with whom you disagree. Please keep this discussion of scholars to a minimum unless there is a direct relation to your theme; the interpretation is the main point of the paper.

I will put a variety of articles and books on Blackboard. You can look at some of these to get

an idea of the main currents in the scholarship. Late papers will be accepted, but the grade will typically be lowered.

10%. Final examination.

25%. Attendance, participation, preparation, short comments. The quality of the 12 short Comments, and how many of them are missing, will also be a factor. (I do not accept late Comments, but two or fewer missing Comments will not be counted against you.)

For every class day, students should prepare not only the readings assigned for that day, but also review the readings discussed on the previous class day.

Comments. Once a week (except for the first and last week), students are required to hand in a short “Comment” about the assigned readings (150 to 250 words). Students with last names A-G will have a Tuesday due date, and the rest Thursday. The Comment should say something informative and insightful about the main point(s) of the readings assigned but not yet discussed in class. You may make use of material already discussed to clarify your point. The Comment must be printed and handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Put your name, date, and title at the top. No email copy needed. Comments will not be formally graded and may or may not be returned with my assessment. No Comments are due for the first and last week of classes. Late Comments will not be accepted, but you may skip 3 Comments without penalty over the course of the semester.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994. ISBN-10: 0872201775.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Man and Citizen*. Hackett Publishing Company, 1991. ISBN-10: 0872201112.

Hobbes, Thomas. *On the Citizen*. Ed. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne. Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN: 0521437806.

A course packet (handout).

TO CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR:

Email: twest@hillsdale.edu. Cell phone 972-849-8515, 8:00am to 10:00pm. Leave a message or text me and I will respond. Office hours (Kendall 313): TuTh 11:00-11:15, 1:00-2:15, 3:45-4:00. I am often in the office at other times. Come by and knock. Email, text, or phone for an appointment, or to find out whether I am in the office.

OTHER MATTERS

Students are bound by all College rules and regulations, including the Policy on Academic Honor.

Computers and other electronic devices must be silenced and put away. This article explains: <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159> (“Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking”).

Food and drinks are permitted if consumed silently and cleaned up.

Reasonable disability accommodations will be granted with appropriate documentation.